



## The 1909 Nancy International Exhibition: Showcase for a Vibrant Region and Swansong of the Ecole de Nancy

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### Abstract

In 1909, five years after Émile Gallé's death and five years before Europe embarked on its bloodiest war ever, the town of Nancy - then only forty kilometres away from the border with Germany - hosted what was to prove an amazingly successful international exhibition: L'Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France. This was to demonstrate to the world that the region had recovered from the painful loss of Alsace and Eastern Lorraine in 1870 and could now take pride, through the flourishing of both Industry and Art, in its booming economy and sophisticated culture. This paper will examine how the exhibition came to be held and what were its objectives and main exhibits, commenting particularly on the style of the main pavilions, the débâcle surrounding the Ecole de Nancy pavilion and the relationship between art and industry. It will go on to highlight, through an examination of the ideological and allegorical discourse and the iconography surrounding the exhibition, the particular place occupied by Lorraine in the nation's self-representation.

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Between May and October 1909, the city of Nancy lived through six months of extraordinary activity and constant celebration. L'Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France (The International Exhibition of Eastern France) was a stupendous event for a provincial town the size of Nancy. This event came at the peak of a unique period of expansion and prosperity for the region of Lorraine, and for Nancy, a period of unique cultural achievement. After a very protracted and uncertain period of planning, the Exhibition proved a resounding success, attracting some two thousand exhibitors and well in excess of two million visitors. Its achievements were much praised at the time, before being forgotten in the bloodbath that was to follow only five years later. The Exhibition's ambitious intention was to demonstrate to the world that the region had fully recovered from the trauma of 1870 and could pride itself in its industry as much as its intellectual and artistic achievements, indeed perhaps, be an example of national regeneration, both moral and economic. One of the closing speeches presented it as 'a work of peace and culture' and 'a symbol of collaboration between Science, Art and Industry'.<sup>1</sup>



Exhibitions were very much part of the spirit of the time, the spirit of the Belle Époque. Enjoyment and sometimes extravagance, but also celebration of progress and modernity, such as the wonders of electricity, were some of the characteristics of this extraordinarily confident era. Alongside the vast events held in Paris, such as the 1889 and 1900 Expositions Universelles, a great many regional, and local exhibitions were held throughout Europe which remain less attentively scrutinised. No less than twelve major regional exhibitions were held in France alone between 1878 and 1909, to which many local and more specialised ones could be added.<sup>2</sup> In 1908, the momentous Franco-British Exhibition to celebrate the *entente cordiale* was held in London, at the White City, in Shepherd's Bush.<sup>3</sup> It received several large delegations from Lorraine. There was even a Lorraine week in London which was mirrored in Nancy by the high profile *semaine anglaise*, one of the



Figure 1 Pierre Claudin lithograph 1909

Exhibition's most successful celebratory events, with a visit by members of the London County Council (figure 1).<sup>4</sup> Nancy's particular history, the profound sadness engendered in the region by the loss of the two provinces in 1870, the influx of population that followed, bringing in many artistic talents and intellectual figures particularly from Strasbourg and Metz and their dynamic influence on the area, always meant that holding an exhibition in Nancy would have a distinctive political and cultural significance. It was never going to be a frivolous affair, no matter what part enjoyment and celebration would take. What follows is a brief outline of how the Exhibition came into being and an overview of the range of its exhibits and events, with a particular focus on the contribution of the Ecole de Nancy. The cultural and visual discourse surrounding the exhibition will then be examined in an attempt to consider what it can tell us of the perception of Lorraine within France and of its own self-perception at that crucial moment in the province's cultural history.

The Exhibition was very slow to take shape. It appears that the city took a long time to mobilise the necessary energies required for a provincial town to put on such a massive event. It meant setting aside ideological differences and prejudices in order to work together. Nancy had had its share of political dissensions. *Le Cri de Nancy*, a satirical paper, referred to the Exhibition in its lead article, in May 1909, as a victory for the Franco-French 'entente'. The Dreyfus affair was indeed still fresh in everyone's mind. Émile Gallé's commitment is now well documented but not everyone in Nancy, by any means, had been a committed Dreyfusard.<sup>5</sup> Right-wing ideas, underscored by the strong presence of the army, had played an important part in the city's recent political history. The

humiliation of 1870, with Nancy enduring a German occupation for three years, and the problems caused by the huge demographic expansion that followed may have played a part in the city being somewhat cautious, and initially divided, as to the best ways in which to celebrate its very real and remarkable achievements.

Professional organisers of exhibitions had shown interest in the city as early as 1902, but the town council initially rejected their proposals. The idea was revived in 1904 and 1905, in particular by a group led by the architect Émile Jacquemin who promoted the idea in the review *L'Immeuble et la construction dans l'Est*.<sup>6</sup> The municipal council was always very clear that, if it was to be, such an exhibition would have to be a grandiose event celebrating the very original character of the city and the region. It would also be a synthesis of the progress accomplished, a work of solidarity. Twelve French départements were in the end to be directly involved, representing the whole of Eastern France: Ardennes, Marne, Meuse, Meurthe-et-Moselle (the new département created in 1870 with what was left of Moselle and Meurthe), Vosges, Haute-Marne, Aube, Côte-d'Or, Haute-Saône, Territoire de Belfort, Doubs and Jura, and of course the areas which had passed under German control, Alsace and Moselle would also be invited to contribute. A decision was made in principle, but the date was put back three times, from 1906 to 1907, then to 1908. Finally, to avoid a clash with the London exhibition in 1908, the date of 1909 was firmly agreed.

The substantial risks attached to the financial commitments and the need to generate confidence to attract exhibitors meant there were many setbacks and delays. By the spring of 1908, the exhibition was in crisis. After the Mayor, Ludovic Beauchet, prompted by the Chamber of Commerce, had tried to intervene to save the exhibition, the appointed director, E O Lami, who was an outsider but a veteran of such events, resigned his functions amongst bitterness and recrimination. The construction was not progressing fast enough; financial undertakings were unresolved, along with many other difficulties. The Chamber of Commerce which, given its pivotal role in the region's economy, was already heavily involved in the project, offered to take over the organisation and to set up a new organising committee. In 1907, as a result of a change in statutes to reflect industrial growth and general expansion, it recruited a new secretary, Louis Laffitte, who came to Nancy after an already



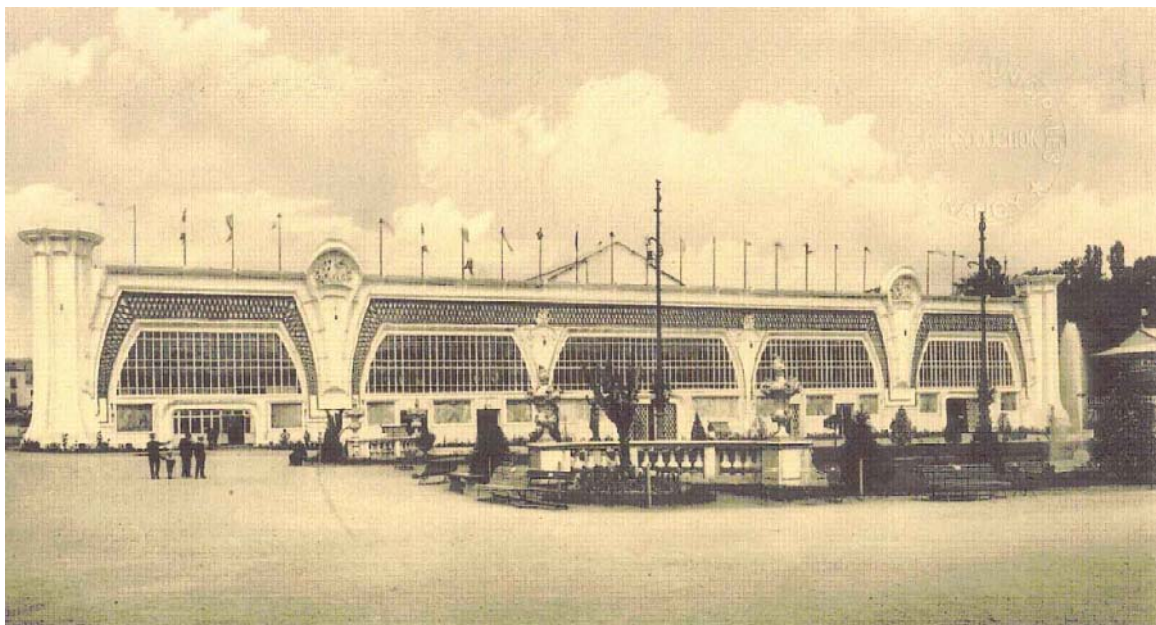
Figure 2 Cover of *Le Cri de Nancy*, May 1909



impressive career in Paris and Nantes. Aged 35, with a strong academic background in both geography and economics, but also committed to contributing to civic life and the recipient of several government commissions, Louis Laffitte proved to be the man of the moment. He was portrayed on the front page of *Le Cri de Nancy* in May 1909 riding the little train - this was the time of the *entente cordiale* and the locomotive was British made - which took visitors from the station in the centre of Nancy to the main Exhibition site (figure 2).

In the space of less than a year, Lafitte and his committee turned round what had seemed a very shaky enterprise, overhauling the financial foundations of the Exhibition and finding solutions to the many problems besetting the project. More importantly, he was able to inspire confidence and generate interest and enthusiasm for the Exhibition all across France and abroad, which in turn ensured its eventual financial success. Many of the palaces and pavilions which had already been planned were enlarged. One of his personal ideas was to recreate an Alsatian village street on the Grand Avenue leading up to the Parc Sainte-Marie, the main site chosen for the Exhibition at the periphery of Nancy, in the area known as 'le Nouveau Nancy'. As can be imagined, the Alsatian village and its indigenous inhabitants were immensely successful with visitors, particularly from the region, who came to attend the many pageants and celebrations which were held there. Many of the smaller pavilions and the attractions – John Calvin Brown, the Anglo-American entrepreneur had been contracted to set up a range of installations, amongst which the Water Chute was particularly successful<sup>7</sup> - found a place in this attractive park which had recently been acquired by the municipality.

The adjacent Terrain Blandan (more or less opposite where the Musée de l'Ecole de Nancy is now located) housed the seven main exhibition palaces around an esplanade and a garden à la française. The central pavilion, the Palais des fêtes, a sort of hall of celebrations where many events and displays - such as a vast horticultural exhibition - were held, was the only one built in wood.



**Figure 3** *Palais des Mines et de la Métallurgie*

Designed by Georges Biet, Henri Marchal and Emile C Toussaint, it featured a vast allegorical fresco by Louis Guingot glorifying Nancy and would not have been out of place in the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. Built along slightly more sober lines, on steel structures, but all very elegantly designed, the other main palaces were devoted to electricity, food, civil engineering and transport.<sup>8</sup> The Textiles Palace, by Lucien Bentz, had mural paintings by Jacques Gruber. The Palace of Mines and Metallurgy, whose architect was Louis Lanternier, was probably the most bold and original of all (figure 3). Lanternier let Eugène Vallin design much of the façade, which was meant to evoke a huge factory with the two corner pylons representing blast furnaces which of course, like all other palaces, were illuminated at night. Individual decorative panels painted by Antoine Vallin, Eugène's son, evoked the successive stages of iron production.

Although the palaces had been initially planned along wide themes, exhibits, which covered



**Figure 4** *Porte monumentale*

virtually every sector of economic, intellectual and artistic activity, were organised in fourteen groups and many subcategories. A large number of awards and prizes were given. Two very special 'grandes médailles d'honneur' went to the crystal works of Baccarat for some splendid pieces displayed again at exhibitions much later in the twentieth century and to the steel works of Pompey which had made the monumental gate, designed by Paul Charbonnier, marking the entrance (figure 4). It was the same

firm which had cast the many 'irons' needed to build the Eiffel Tower for the 1889 exhibition in Paris. The Esplanade also included a Lorraine farm. A recreated Senegalese village featured inside the park along with its own inhabitants and a small colonial section: this was of course the colonial dimension European countries were so proud of at the time. Amongst the smaller pavilions, the Pavillon du Gaz (devoted to the gas industry and exhibiting innovations in the areas of lighting, heating and cooking) can also be noted for its attractive Art Nouveau design (figure 5).

A particularly unusual pavilion housed in the park was La Maison des Magasins Réunis. Eugène Corbin, the then Director of the Nancy based department store, Les Magasins Réunis, is of course well known for his passionate interest in the arts and as the main patron of



**Figure 5** *Pavillon de l'industrie du Gaz*



the Ecole de Nancy. The Magasins Réunis which had become so influential in the region at the time and a sure sign of its economic prosperity, were the second largest financial backers of the Exhibition after the city council and were given the opportunity to have their very own pavilion, designed, like the store itself, by the architect Lucien Weissenburger. Many department stores had had substantial displays at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle and all had their own pavilions in 1925 at the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs in Paris.<sup>9</sup> It may well be the case that, by deciding to fit out a whole house under the name of his store at the Nancy Exhibition, Eugène Corbin was showing foresight at this turning point in the history of department stores. Department stores were starting not only to distribute goods, but to realise that they could play a major role in influencing modern tastes, creating their own signature designs.<sup>10</sup> The pavilion recreated a fully furnished house (called *la Maison Moderne*, unashamedly reusing the name of Meier-Graefe's defunct establishment in Paris) displaying all the domestic wares, furnishings and the fashion clothing of a bourgeois household.<sup>11</sup> Although Eugène Corbin never succeeded in persuading the main Ecole de Nancy artists such as Gallé to allow him to distribute and sell their work, he was able to secure the collaboration of younger or lesser known creators whose work he was hoping to promote in the future. In the pavilion, the displays were enhanced by many Ecole de Nancy artefacts, some from Eugène Corbin's personal collections. Victor Prouvé contributed to some of the decoration of the pavilion and, in particular, designed two large caryatids which stood at the entrance.

As can be seen, many artists from the Ecole de Nancy contributed in different ways to the design and decoration of the pavilions and palaces but, of course, the Ecole also had its very own pavilion. Right from the start, the organising committee and the municipality wanted the Ecole de Nancy to figure prominently in the Exhibition as one of the prime examples of the close collaboration between Industry and Art vital to the region and its reputation well beyond its frontiers. A grant of 40,000 francs was voted by the municipal council to the Ecole to help it design and build its own pavilion along its own artistic principles. An attractive location within the Parc Sainte-Marie was reserved for it. The objective was to build 'a decorative, visually harmonious ensemble, demonstrating local artistic productions as an integrated whole'.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, the building was marred by a string of controversies and difficulties. The first design put forward by the architects Émile André and Gaston Munier was rejected by the Directing Committee of the Ecole and instead Eugène Vallin's design was selected. Eugène Vallin was not an architect but a cabinet maker, described by Prouvé as 'haunted by architecture'. Vallin chose a material which was very new at the time: reinforced stone, for its aesthetic possibilities and because it was very durable. It was always intended that the pavilion would remain and the Ecole wanted to make the best use of the money allocated to them. But the choice of material was later criticised and challenged by some members. In addition to these disputes, the lack of labour trained in the specialist use of the material, the gradually rising costs and the very poor weather conditions, delayed the construction.

The unfinished pavilion was inaugurated on 13 July, over two months after the opening of the Exhibition (figure 6). The first floor gallery was never built, much of the interior decoration had to be





**Figure 6** *Pavillon de l'École de Nancy*

simplified and fibrous plaster had to be used in several places. Although embarrassed by the delay, Victor Prouvé, the president of the Ecole de Nancy, since Gallé's death in 1904, gave an account in his inaugural speech of the enthusiasm initially generated by the project which would allow various 'métiers d'art' - craftsmen and artisans - to collaborate and to meet. It had always been intended that the building would be retained as an exhibition space and hopefully a permanent museum for the decorative arts – a much needed

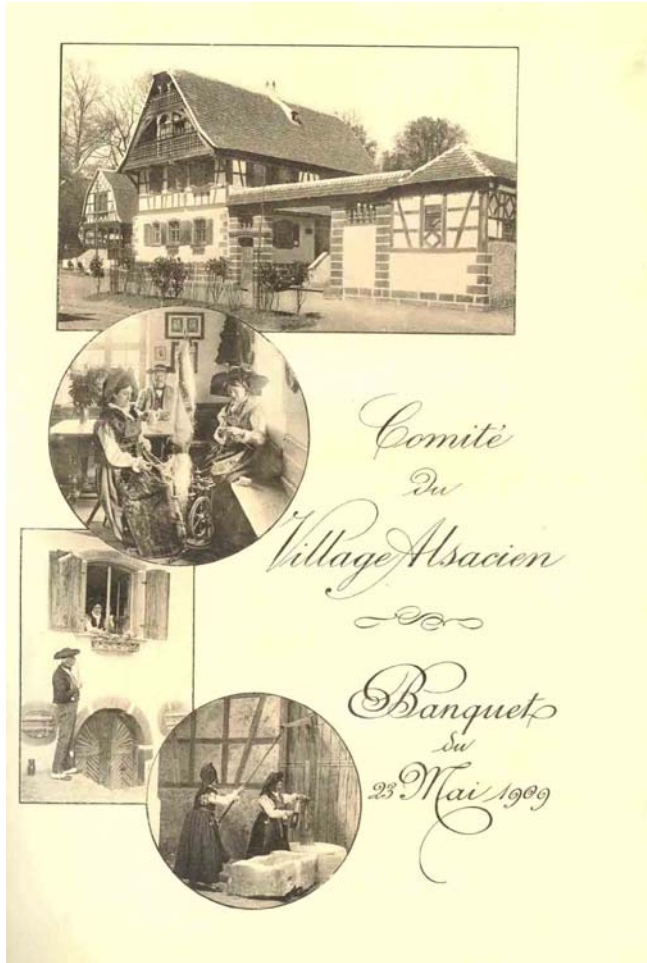
project to ensure the movement's future, very much at the heart of Gallé's preoccupations towards the end of his life. Victor Prouvé himself contributed the sculpture for the pediment above the main door (figure 7). This was described as expressing a synthesis of the ideas of the Lorraine movement: both symbolism and close observation of nature, elevated thought, but also hard work and patience. The general theme was



**Figure 7** *Victor Prouvé Inspiration*

Inspiration, signified by an eagle at the very top, ready to take its flight and a standing draped female figure looking up towards the Eagle whilst a young man seated in a park amongst ruins is studying and drawing nature all around him. A large peacock can be seen on the left.<sup>13</sup>

The pavilion's style was very well received and attracted enormous interest, though the interior arrangement was not as elegant as anticipated. The building turned out to be one of the very final architectural productions identified with the Ecole de Nancy. The year after the exhibition, the municipality, so eager to fund the building initially, voted to have it demolished, amongst bitter recriminations and much disappointment. Victor Prouvé wrote a moving letter pleading for it to be retained and completed, and turned into a permanent museum, a regional Petit Palais, emulating the



**Figure 8** *Le village alsacien*

1900 Paris Grand and Petit Palais, but costs were thought too prohibitive and it disappeared alongside all the other palaces and exhibition halls.<sup>14</sup> The only surviving building from the Exhibition is the Maison Alsacienne, la Maison de Zütendorf, which had been transported from Alsace and rebuilt in the grand avenue, as part of the Alsatian village (figure 8). It was rebuilt again in the Parc Sainte-Marie where it can still be seen today.

Inside the Ecole de Nancy pavilion, one large central hall led out onto a number of individual exhibition spaces distributed all around. Gallé had only died four years previously and his powerful presence was strongly evoked: Prouvé's well-known portrait was on display in the central hall alongside, appropriately for an exhibition celebrating Lorraine, the large table often named after the Tacitus

quotation inscribed on it: 'Le Rhin sépare des Gaules toute la Germanie' (The Rhine separates the Gauls from all of Germania). This table had originally been made in collaboration with Victor Prouvé and Louis Hestaux for the 1889 Paris Exposition Universelle.<sup>15</sup> It expresses Gallé's strong reaction and sadness at the disaster of 1870 and the partition of Lorraine. All the main names of the Ecole and the full range of their productions were represented: the Gallé workshops, Majorelle and Vallin (figure 9). Prouvé's sculpture, *La Nuit* (Night) was displayed alongside a great variety of his design work. Some of Jacques Gruber's stained glass as well as Mme Gruber's embroidery work, the Mougin brothers' stoneware, bookbinding by René Wiener and many other artefacts were also included. Antonin Daum in particular had a large, much admired display. Several individual rooms off the main hall were each fully furnished by one artist: Louis Laurent Neiss, Justin Ferez, Louis Majorelle. Some displays were mixed, others devoted to one particular artist but, disappointingly, no major collaborative new work seems to have been shown. One commentator, at least, in the *Bulletin des Sociétés Artistiques de l'Est* questioned whether all the exhibits really followed the principle of close observation of nature at the heart of the Ecole, thus indicating that perhaps unity of purpose was on the wane.<sup>16</sup> One innovation, triggered by Prouvé's initiative, had been to organise competitions and prizes for the decorative arts in different categories which enabled some new and young artists to exhibit their work alongside already established





**Figure 9** *Pavillon de L'Ecole de Nancy – Grande Salle*

names. Prouvé himself, whose work was very much in evidence in the exhibition generally, had also been asked to design the main exhibition certificate awarded to prize winners.

Organising such a large exhibition was always going to be a challenge for a town the size of Nancy. It seems that it was only when control was firmly in the hands of Nancy-based organisations, men devoted to the future and success of the region, prepared to put aside their differences, that the project took hold and flourished beyond expectations. Louis Laffitte, who, though recently arrived in Nancy, had clearly been seduced by the culture and vitality of the region, realised the extent to which it had become a driving force in France's economy. This importance was largely due to the discovery of iron leading to the enormous expansion of heavy industry, much needed if France was ever going to compete in the modern world. His massive report on the Exhibition, much of which is devoted to a demonstration of the economic strength of Eastern France, is still a substantial research tool offering exhaustive evidence of the region's economic vitality. Nevertheless, Nancy embraced a very special alliance between industry and art, at the heart of the Ecole de Nancy, which was also sometimes tinged with utopianism, creating a unique context. 'Nancy la coquette' and 'la Lorraine laborieuse', could feed off each other.<sup>17</sup>

The memory of the lost provinces and the perception that Lorraine – what remained of it - was now a frontier province (Germany was then only 40 kilometres away from Nancy) seemed to reinforce the traditional association between Lorraine and patriotic ideas. Lorraine, the home of Joan of Arc, the simple girl from the country, emblem of resistance to foreign invasion, is everywhere behind the discourse surrounding the Exhibition.<sup>18</sup> This rhetoric is not necessarily infused with a spirit of revenge, but comes out indirectly, in the need for rebirth and regeneration of the country, as well as the urge to

show that the wounds have healed. In an article published in July 1909 in the periodical *Idées modernes* which published a special issue devoted to Nancy and Lorraine to coincide with the exhibition, Louis Laffitte and Jacques Cordier, who contributed the section 'L'Industrie lorraine', conclude:

In the same way as nature provides a layer of scar tissue around a wound, a true surge of replacement activity has appeared along the mutilated frontier. The riches Alsace supplied to the mother land have been reclaimed by hard working Lorraine.<sup>19</sup>

The lower section of Gallé's allegorical table, (*Rhine*) displays, beside the cross of Lorraine, a large thistle, emblem of Nancy, which is seen to entwine the thin columns forming the crossbar as so many lost provinces. Produced not so long after 1870, this table was proudly displayed again, as a political statement, at the centre of the Ecole de Nancy pavilion in 1909.<sup>20</sup> The allegorical mode is in fact everywhere present in the more minor productions surrounding the Exhibition as well as the speeches and pageants which took place, acknowledging this need to give a special meaning to Lorraine's situation – not only for the Lorrains themselves, but also to the rest of France and the world. Lady Beachcroft, whose husband led the London delegation to Nancy during the *semaine anglaise*, insisted on making a detour via the statue of Joan of Arc in the old town to lay a wreath, in a gesture of unexpected solidarity with Lorraine and France.<sup>21</sup> The rural heart of Lorraine, a certain nostalgic poetry associated with the land and in tune with Maurice Barrès's ideas and writing, regularly comes to the fore whenever Lorraine is mentioned and represented.

Pierre Roger Claudin, a young painter and illustrator-designer, not on the committee of the Ecole, but associated with it, produced several representations of this kind for the Exhibition. He created the official poster described in these terms at the time by Emile Badel, another local writer: 'a Lorraine peasant girl in traditional costume releases pigeons, urbi et orbi, from the balcony of the Hotel de Ville in Nancy to tell the world the news [of the Exhibition]' (figure 10).<sup>22</sup> Claudin also painted a delicate water-colour a year after the Exhibition. Alluding to the tale of Sleeping Beauty, it evokes the originally ill-fated birth of the Exhibition, later transformed by magic into a fairy-tale success. A magician (probably identifiable as Ludovic Beauchet, the Mayor of Nancy, without whom the Exhibition would never have existed) stands to the left of the cradle where the infant Exhibition is



Figure 10 Pierre Claudin Exhibition Poster, 1909

sleeping. In attendance can be seen a number of good fairies, amongst them allegories of Alsace and Lorraine bearing gifts in the shape of the Alsatian village and the monumental entrance gate to the Exhibition. It is likely that this watercolour was painted in memory of the December 1909 meeting of the local Nancy academy, le couarail, where poets and artists regularly met on the day of Saint Nicholas, not long after the Exhibition had closed. Louis Laffitte, an honorary member, read a sort of fairy-tale, a *conte bleu*, of his own composition, reminiscing on the 'story of the exhibition' in allegorical mode.<sup>23</sup>

During the Exhibition itself, much music was performed, some specially composed for the event, such as the cantata of *Jeanne la Patrie* (Joan the motherland), written as a special offering to Nancy by a Parisian composer, Bourgault-Ducoudray. Concerts were often conducted by the then director of the Nancy conservatoire, J Guy Ropartz. Although a Breton himself, Guy Ropartz had recently written a choral work of particular meaning to Lorrains, which was performed during the Exhibition and dedicated to Maurice Barrès: *The Legend of Saint Nicholas*, which evokes the patron saint of Lorraine and is firmly rooted in peasant folklore.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, the same Pierre Claudin contributed watercolours for the luxury edition of this work also displayed as an exhibit in the printing section of the Exhibition; and the words are by René d'Avril, a local writer and poet particularly prolific at the time.<sup>25</sup> René d'Avril wrote poems, including some celebrating the delicate works of Gallé and other Art Nouveau artists, as well, for example, as the working lives of metal workers.<sup>26</sup> Again the different arts and industry in Nancy were shown to work together and support each other. While often perpetuating a certain representation of Lorraine, attached to its rural past and roots and long-suffering, these works nonetheless turned resolutely towards modernity and the future and the

strength of Lorraine as a source of possible rebirth and regeneration.<sup>27</sup> Tensions may well be apparent amongst these representations, but divergent forces can also be seen to work together, recalling the Franco-French entente evoked in the press on the very day the Exhibition opened its gates.

If the success of the Exhibition momentarily produced the glitter of a fairy tale for the town of Nancy and the region, for the Ecole de Nancy, sadly, it turned out to be a swansong.<sup>28</sup> Although its powerful presence was felt everywhere in the Exhibition, and many pavilions and exhibits were witness to the vitality of individual artists, the disappointment over the pavilion



Figure 11 Pierre Claudin watercolour, 1910





and its later demolition seem to herald the long period of neglect the movement would have to endure. Five years later, the First World War broke out and, in 1916, the attractive Art Nouveau façade of the Magasins Réunis built by Weissenburger was destroyed when Nancy was bombed. Louis Laffitte - who was my grandfather - was killed in the early battles of the war as the French army marched through annexed Lorraine, near Morhange, in August 1914. My mother had been born just before the opening of the Exhibition and was often called the 'small exhibition'. The Claudin watercolour featuring the Exhibition as an infant thus acquires a supplementary reading for my family - for whom the death of Louis Laffitte certainly brought the fairy tale to an end (figure 11). Nancy would never again enjoy a period of such prosperity and culture. Lorraine, however, reunified in 1918, continued to thrive economically for more than 60 years.

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Figures 3 and 4 are reproduced with the kind permission of the Archives municipales de Nancy. Figure 10 is reproduced with the kind permission of the Musée de l'École de Nancy. All other photographs were made from the author's family collection by Claire I R O'Mahony. Figure 1 is plate xxvi (p 784) and figure 8 is plate v (p 780), figure 5 (p 481), figure 6 (p 38) figure 7 (p 35) and figure 9 (p 40) in Louis Laffitte, *Rapport Général sur l'Exposition Internationale de L'Est de la France – Nancy 1909*, Berger-Levrault, Paris-Nancy, 1912.

<sup>1</sup> 'Nous sommes reconnaissants [au Gouvernement de la République] d'avoir soutenu notre patriotisme et contribué, en définitive, à faire de l'Exposition de Nancy une œuvre supérieure, œuvre de paix et de culture française qui nous grandit aux yeux de nos compatriotes, de nos clients, de nos amis, même de nos concurrents et qui, à ce tournant décisif de l'Histoire de la Lorraine, symbolise la collaboration féconde de la Science, des Arts, de l'Industrie, et apparaît à tous comme le gage d'un brillant avenir'. Louis Laffitte, *Rapport Général sur l'Exposition Internationale de L'Est de la France – Nancy 1909*, Berger-Levrault, Paris-Nancy, 1912, p cxxix.

<sup>2</sup> Laffitte, 1912, p x, including note 1.

<sup>3</sup> On the Franco-British exhibition see Martyn Cornick, 'The White City, 1908', in Richard Mayne, Douglas Johnson and Robert Tombs (eds), *Cross Channel Currents: 100 Years of Entente Cordiale*, Routledge, London, 2004, pp 17-19.

<sup>4</sup> See 'Les fêtes franco-britanniques' in Laffitte, 1912, pp 782-790.

<sup>5</sup> See for example Christian Debize, *Émile Gallé and L'École de Nancy*, Éditions Serpenoise, Metz, 1998, pp 36-37 and a more recent publication, Bertrand Tillier, *Émile Gallé: le verrier dreyfusard*, Ed de L'Amateur, Paris, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> See Laffitte, 1912, pp xi-xvii. Jacquemin, who wrote under the pseudonym Jean Micque unfortunately died in 1907, before the Exhibition came into being, but is acknowledged as one of the early enthusiasts and promoters of the event.

<sup>7</sup> The resolutely modern character of the installations was seen as a source of pride by the organisers, and so was the immensely successful, though costly, 'aviation week': various events were held on a site just outside Nancy, one of the chief attractions being Nancy's very own airship which, although disappointing technically, generated enormous excitement in that pioneering era of flight.

<sup>8</sup> The civil engineering displays were in fact later moved to the enlarged transport pavilion and the original palace in the end housed the liberal arts. The University, enriched by academics who had arrived from Metz and Strasbourg, and other higher education establishments whose reputation was growing at the time, were all well represented there.

<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to Robert Proctor for help with this section See also his article in this special issue.

<sup>10</sup> See Frédéric Descouturelle, 'Exposition Nancy 1909: les Magasins Réunis s'exposent', *Arts nouveaux*, 17, pp 16-21. On Corbin's architectural policy for his store over the period 1890-1939, see Catherine Coley, 'Les Magasins Réunis: from the Provinces to Paris, from Art Nouveau to Art Deco', in Geoffrey Crossick and Serge Jaumain (eds), *Cathedrals of Consumption*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 1999, pp 225-251.

<sup>11</sup> On 'La Maison Moderne', see Nancy J Troy, *Modernism and the Decorative Arts in France: Art Nouveau to Le Corbusier*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1991, pp 43-47.

<sup>12</sup> '[...] un ensemble décoratif d'une seule tenue [qui devait présenter] le caractère d'unité des productions d'art local'. *Bulletin des Sociétés Artistiques de l'Est*, December (1907). French text and translation quoted in Roselyne Bouvier, 'Le Pavillon de l'École de Nancy à l'Exposition internationale de l'Est de la France - Eugène Vallin 1908-1909', *Art Nouveau en projet - Art Nouveau in Progress*, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, 2000, pp 38-39. I am indebted to Valérie Thomas and Françoise Sylvestre at the École de Nancy Museum for their help with this. Since the 2004 conference for which this paper was written, Anne-Laure Dusoir has published on the Web an account of the part played by the École de Nancy at the 1909 International Exhibition, based on her unpublished Maîtrise dissertation. See Anne-Laure Dusoir, *L'École de Nancy à l'Exposition Internationale de l'Est de la France*,

[http://www.artnouveau.net.eu/data/PROCEEDINGS\\_DOWNLOAD/BRUSSEL/Anne\\_Laure\\_Dusoir.doc](http://www.artnouveau.net.eu/data/PROCEEDINGS_DOWNLOAD/BRUSSEL/Anne_Laure_Dusoir.doc)



Her paper was delivered in the context of Réseau Art Nouveau Network, Laboratoire historique 1, Brussels, 22 October 2005.

<sup>13</sup> See, amongst other descriptions, E Hinzelin, 'L'Art en Lorraine – L'École de Nancy' in *Idées modernes*, vol 3, 1909, pp 177-199 (p 197) and André Fontaine quoted in Madeleine Prouvé, *Victor Prouvé 1858-1943*, Berger Levrault, Paris-Nancy, 1958, p 118.

<sup>14</sup> See Prouvé, 1958, pp 118-119, and Valérie Thomas, 'Le Musée de l'École de Nancy', in Roselyne Bouvier, Valérie Thomas, François Parmantier and Jérôme Perrin, *Musée de l'École de Nancy*, Edition de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2001, p 9.

<sup>15</sup> Bouvier, Thomas, Parmantier and Perrin, 2001, pp 18-19.

<sup>16</sup> Commandant Lalance, 'Ecole de Nancy – Inauguration de son Pavillon d'exposition', *Bulletin des Sociétés Artistiques de l'Est*, August 1909, pp 87-92 (p 91).

<sup>17</sup> 'Nancy la coquette' refers to the embellishments under Stanislas, not Art Nouveau elegance. On 'la Lorraine laborieuse' see note 19.

<sup>18</sup> Michel Winock offers a detailed study of the multivalent image of Joan of Arc in French national memory. During the Third Republic, claimed in different ways by the nationalist right, and the Catholic church, but also, on the republican side, by some radicals, her image was even acknowledged as a symbol of reconciliation above party squabbles, appealing thus to centre factions. See Michel Winock, 'Jeanne d'Arc' in *Lieux de mémoire: 3 les France*, sous la direction de Pierre Nora, Gallimard, Paris, [Quarto edition in 3 volumes], vol 3, 1997, pp 4427-4473. In the context of Lorraine itself, its appeal was so widespread that it would indeed contribute to the healing of divisions and differences, so crucial to the success of the exhibition.

<sup>19</sup> 'Comme autour de plaies, où la nature refait un bourrelet de chair protecteur, il s'est produit à la frontière mutilée une véritable activité de remplacement. Toute la richesse que l'Alsace fournissait à la mère-patrie, a été récupérée par la Lorraine laborieuse'. Laffitte, Louis et Cordier, Jacques, 'L'industrie lorraine', *Idées modernes*, vol 3: 'Nancy et Lorraine', July 1909, pp 113-124 (p 124).

<sup>20</sup> See also O'Mahony article in this special issue which illustrates and analyses the table.

<sup>21</sup> See Laffitte, 1912, p 787.

<sup>22</sup> Source: Archives Municipales de Nancy.

<sup>23</sup> See Laffitte, 1912, pp 819-821.

<sup>24</sup> The legend recounts the story of three young boys from the country who, after losing their way whilst gleaning, go and knock on a butcher's door on the outskirts of the town, asking for shelter. He welcomes them with open arms, but soon turns them into salt meat. Seven years later they are resuscitated by the passing bishop who is none other than Saint Nicholas.

<sup>25</sup> René d'Avril, Léon Malgras by his real name, is listed, alongside Emile Badel quoted above, by Christian Debize amongst a group of intellectuals influential in supporting the work of the Ecole de Nancy. *Emile Gallé and l'École de Nancy*, Editions Serpenoise, Metz, 1998, p 113.

<sup>26</sup> *Le Cri de Nancy* ran a series of René d'Avril's poems under the title 'Paysages industriels'. The May 1909 issue featured the poem 'Verrerie lorraine', a direct evocation of the Nancy glass work artists. *Le Cri de Nancy*, 12, 15 mai 1909, p 278.

<sup>27</sup> A manuscript note by Louis Laffitte, dated September 1909, reproduced in *Le Livre d'or de l'Est de La France 1909*, Louis Quérrouil directeur, describes Lorraine somewhat enthusiastically as 'the living microcosm of an idealised France in the diverse manifestations of its genius', 'Lorraine, a wonderful reserve of energy and riches which industrialists, craftsmen and workers from the lost provinces have contributed to enhance, a country where everything is made of iron, the soil as well as men' ('pays où tout est de fer, le sol comme les hommes'). In the 'conte bleu' written by Louis Laffitte and mentioned above, the Exhibition appears as a sort of Joan of Arc figure, destined to die young but heralding an era of unprecedented prosperity.

<sup>28</sup> Alain Dusart and François Moulin also describe the Exhibition as 'l'allégorique chant du cygne'. See Alain Dusart and François Moulin, *Art nouveau: l'épopée lorraine*, La Nuée Bleue, Editions de l'Est, Strasbourg, 1998, p 121.